



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.



Wednesday, November 13, 2019

E-cigarette or Vaping Associated Lung Injury (EVALI)

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Dear Colleagues:

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Situation

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On November 7th, a previously healthy Marin County resident in her forties died from pulmonary disease, suspected to be related to the use of e-cigarettes. She had taken up vaping six months earlier and presented with shortness of breath, fever, and chest pain, with rapid progression to Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome and death. This is the fourth fatality attributed to vaping in California.

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Since August 2019, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has reported 160 cases of E-cigarette, or Vaping Product Use Associated Lung Injury (EVALI, formerly referred to as VAPI). Nationally, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported 2,051 cases in 49 states.

While the cause of EVALI remains unknown, recent CDC laboratory testing of lung fluid samples from 29 cases in 10 states found vitamin E acetate in all samples. Vitamin E acetate is sometimes used as an additive in the production of e-cigarette or vaping products, particularly those containing THC.

Marin County Public Health officials are working with the California Department of Public Health and the CDC to test samples to determine the specific products or compounds that may have contributed to this death in Marin County.

Actions Requested of Clinicians

- Marin County Public Health is advising all residents to refrain from vaping until the source of EVALI is known and products are removed from the market.
- Clinicians should be aware of the risk factors, signs and symptoms of EVALI and ask about potential history of e-cigarette or vaping use in patients who present with compatible symptoms.

- EVALI is a diagnosis of exclusion as no specific test or marker exists for its diagnosis. Health care providers should consider multiple etiologies, including the possibility of EVALI and concomitant infection.
- If EVALI is suspected, a detailed history of the substances used, the sources of products, duration and frequency of use, and the devices used should be obtained, as outlined in [Update: Interim Guidance for Health Care Providers Evaluating and Caring for Patients with Suspected E-cigarette, or Vaping, Product Use Associated Lung Injury — United States, October 2019](#)
- Refer to the [Fact Sheet for Evaluating and Caring for Patients with Suspected EVALI](#)
- Clinicians should report potential EVALI cases to Marin County Public Health by phone 415-473-4163 (after hours call 415-499-7237).
- If a suspected case has a vaping product on hand, it should be collected and held for testing, to be arranged by Marin County Public Health.
- Clinicians should continue to counsel patients about the known health risks associated with e-cigarette use and vaping.
- Tailored information about cessation for [patients and providers](#) is available from the California Smokers' Helpline, including live counseling:
 - Vape Users: 1-844-8-NO-VAPE (1-844-866-8273)
 - Smokers: 1-800-NO-BUTTS (1-800-662-8887)
 - Spanish: 1-800-45-NO-FUME (1-800-456-6386)
 - Vietnamese: 1-800-778-8440

Background

Vaping refers to the increasingly popular practice of inhaling vapor from an electronic smoking device or e-cigarette, which heat-vaporizes liquids that can contain nicotine, chemical flavorings, cannabis, or other drugs. The liquids used in e-cigarettes are largely unregulated and can contain toxic chemicals that cause lung damage.

In August 2019, Marin County Public Health issued a warning recommending that residents cease e-cigarette use and vaping until the cause of the outbreak could be determined.

The 2018 California Healthy Kids Survey found that 28 percent of Marin County 11th graders vape regularly. In response to growing concerns about safety and increasing use among youth, most Marin County cities and towns have voted to ban the sale of flavored tobacco and vaping products. Most of these ordinances do not go into effect until January 2020. San Francisco has banned the sale of e-cigarettes and vaping products.

Other Resources

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[California Department of Public Health](#)

Marin HHS. Tobacco Prevention Services. <https://www.marinhhs.org/tobacco-prevention-services>